

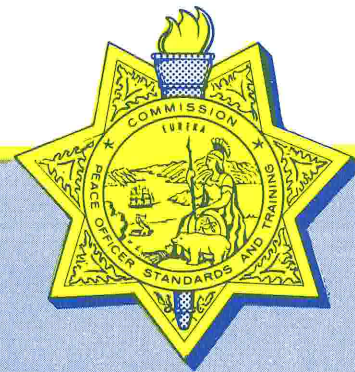
ARCHIVES

VOLUNTARY

K-9 TEAM

GUIDELINES

October 1995



THE COMMISSION
ON PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ARCHIVES
VOLUNTARY
K-9 TEAM
GUIDELINES

1995

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POST Media Distribution Desk
1601 Alhambra Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95816
(916) 227-4856

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PREFACE

In 1991 a group of K-9 Officers, Law Enforcement Managers, and K-9 Trainers from throughout the state met to discuss the need for K-9 Team Standards in California. The group believed that local liability would be reduced if statewide K-9 Team Standards were available. They further believed that these standards, to be acceptable and have impact, should be supported by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

In February 1992, POST brought this committee and other interested experts together, and they agreed to develop guidelines for standards in the areas of Obedience, Search, Apprehension, Handler Protection, Handler Selection, and Evaluation. After initial development work and following several reviews which resulted in consensus, the proposed guidelines were submitted to and approved by the POST Commission in July 1992.

Following Commission action, POST brought the subject matter experts together again and developed suggested scenarios to test the recommended minimum K-9 Team Standards contained within the approved guidelines. POST developed a one-day Evaluators' Course and accompanying evaluation forms to train the officers who will evaluate the K-9 Teams.

The guidelines in this document are for the voluntary use of law enforcement agencies and are intended to assist those agencies in assuring minimum levels of performance by K-9 teams. The guidelines are sufficiently general to accommodate differing agencies' policies regarding operational deployment of K-9 teams.

This document contains:

1. The *Voluntary K-9 Team Guidelines* established by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training.
2. Scenarios for K-9 Team Testing.
3. K-9 Team Evaluation Forms.
4. Course Outline for One-day Evaluators' Course.

The Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training is deeply grateful to the many law enforcement managers and K-9 experts who assisted in the development of this voluntary program. Bruce Praet, an Attorney in Orange County and a former K-9 Officer, deserves particular thanks for his leadership role in this endeavor.

Questions regarding the *Voluntary K-9 Team Guidelines* should be directed to the Training Delivery and Compliance Bureau at POST (916) 227-4862.

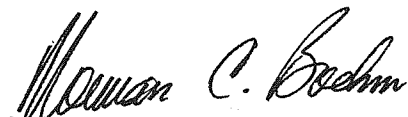

NORMAN C. BOEHM
Executive Director

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K-9 TEAM GUIDELINES

OBEDIENCE:

The handler will demonstrate the ability to control the canine during an obedience performance test. Testing will be conducted using reasonable job-related distractions.

1. The canine will perform a basic routine of left, right, and about turns, both slow and quick pace, and both on and off leash.
2. The handler will "down" the canine in motion and then recall the dog to a "heel" position from a distance.
3. The handler will "down" the canine from a distance and then recall the dog to a "heel" position.

SEARCH:

Under the direction and reasonable control of the handler, the canine will locate a hidden person in a structure or building, and in an outdoor area within a reasonable period of time. The dog will "alert" the handler after finding the person. The "alert" will be a recognized signal from the dog to the handler which indicates the presence of a hidden person. The handler will notify the evaluator of the recognizable signal prior to testing.

1. In a structure or building of at least 2,500 sq. ft., with multiple rooms and hiding places, the dog will locate a hidden person and "alert" the handler.
2. In an outdoor area, at least one acre in size with multiple hiding locations, the dog will locate a hidden person and "alert" the handler.

APPREHENSION:

Under the direction of the handler and while off leash, the canine will pursue and apprehend a person acting as a suspect.

1. On command from the handler, the canine will pursue and apprehend the suspect.
2. From a reasonable distance and on verbal command only, the canine will cease the apprehension.
3. The K-9 team will demonstrate a pursuit and call off prior to apprehension.

HANDLER PROTECTION:

The canine will demonstrate the ability to defend the handler during a physical attack.

1. During a testing scenario simulating an attack on the handler, the canine will defend the handler against the physical attack.
2. On verbal command from the handler, the canine will cease physical contact with the attacking person.

K-9 HANDLER SELECTION:

The following guidelines are recommended for consideration in the selection of a K-9 handler.

1. Strong character traits such as:
 - Maturity
 - Patience
 - Initiative
 - Flexibility
 - Dependability
 - Enthusiasm
 - Emotional stability
 - Communication skills (verbal and written)
2. Good physical condition
3. Good physical health
4. Should be comfortable with and have an understanding of dogs
5. Good interpersonal relationships with the public and other employees
6. Home life should be compatible with canine
7. Possess a POST Basic Certificate

EVALUATION:

The K-9 Team shall be evaluated by a POST-approved K-9 Team Evaluator prior to general law enforcement deployment and at least once annually. If the K-9 Team fails testing, the retest shall not be retaken on the same day.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT K-9 EVALUATOR

1. The K-9 Team Evaluator should have a minimum of five years experience as a Law Enforcement K-9 Handler or Law Enforcement K-9 Trainer, and a minimum of two hundred hours of documented training in the area of testing/evaluation.

2. Must attend a one-day, POST-certified K-9 Team Evaluators' Course. (Student must provide verification of course prerequisites prior to the beginning of the course.)
3. In order to preserve the highest standards of professionalism and to avoid any perceived conflict of interest between the Evaluator and the K-9 Team, the Evaluator:
 - A. Cannot have a monetary interest in training of the K-9 Team being evaluated.
 - B. Cannot be the owner, handler, supervisor, or trainer of the dog/handler being evaluated.

NARCOTICS DETECTION K-9 TEAM GUIDELINES

SEARCH:

While demonstrating reasonable control and coordination between the handler and canine used in narcotics detection, the canine must find a minimum of three different types of narcotics (Heroin, Cocaine, and Marijuana) within a reasonable period of time in three different types of locations.

1. Building search
2. Vehicle search
3. Outside area search

The narcotics used in testing should be obtained from or certified by a certified lab; or if not available in a timely manner then validated by a field presumptive test. Failure of any portion of the narcotics evaluation mandates a complete retest.

SCENARIOS FOR K-9 TEAM TESTING

OBEDIENCE

Handlers will report to the evaluator with the dog on a leash. At the direction of the evaluator, the team will complete the following exercises as called for by the evaluator. During the exercises the dog shall be under the handler's control at the "heel" position, neither lagging behind, or forging ahead of, the handler.

At the "forward" direction of the evaluator, handlers will proceed ahead with their dogs at the "heel" position and at a normal walking pace. The evaluator will direct the handler-canine team through a series of turns and movements including the following:

On leash:

- 1) Two right turns
- 2) Two left turns
- 3) Two about-turns
- 4) Two stop/sits

Off leash (with distraction):

- 1) Two right turns
- 2) Two left turns
- 3) Two about-turns
- 4) Two stop/sits
- 5) Down in motion:
While jogging forward, the handler will "down" the dog on the evaluator's command and continue to jog forward until reaching a designated point (at least 30 paces away). The handler will then turn and face the dog. At the evaluator's command, handlers will recall the dogs to their locations by means of voice and/or hand signal(s), to a finish "heel" position.
- 6) With the dog in a stand/stay OR sit/stay position, handlers, from locations at least 30 paces away, will face the dog, wait for the evaluator's command, then "down" the dog by means of voice and/or hand signals. The handlers will then recall the dogs upon the command of the evaluator.

The obedience exercises should be conducted in an environment closely simulating realistic job conditions and distractions, such as, but not restricted to, the following:

Heeling through a group of four or more individuals moving and/or talking in an animated manner;

The team's patrol vehicle standing nearby with radio and/or emergency lights on, with one or more doors standing open;

A "jogger" or other non-threatening individual passing in proximity to the exercise area.

SEARCH

Upon command of the evaluator, the K-9 team will approach the designated search area on foot. At the handler's direction and command, the dog shall actively and systematically search the test area until the suspect is located or the evaluator terminates the exercise.

There shall be a recognized signal, "alert", from the dog to the handler which indicates that the dog has located a hidden person. The handler must be able to interpret the dog's "alert" clearly enough to be able to inform the evaluator of the "suspect's" location. Once handlers have signaled the "alert" of their canines to the evaluator, the exercise is complete. The handlers shall demonstrate the ability to control the dogs fully throughout all phases of the search.

APPREHENSION

(Without contact)

The K-9 team will begin the exercise "off-leash" from a designated starting position. Handlers will ensure that the dogs remain with them and may hold the dog's collar to do so. Upon the evaluator's signal, a "suspect" will present himself visually at a reasonable distance (25-30 yards) from the K-9 team and begin running away. The handler will verbally order the suspect to stop. The "suspect" will ignore the order and continue flight. The handler will then send the dog in pursuit of the suspect and should join in the pursuit to ensure full view of the dog and suspect. Allowing a reasonable distance (20-30 yards), the suspect will stop in mid-flight at the evaluator's command and stand still. At this time the handler will verbally order the dog to abandon the apprehension. The dog must not physically contact the suspect after the "call off" command from the handler.

APPREHENSION

(With Contact)

This exercise will duplicate the above procedure, except in this scenario the suspect will not stop and the handler will send the dog to pursue, contact, and apprehend the "suspect." The handler may join in the pursuit. The dog will contact and control the suspect until called off by the handler.

After the apprehension and on verbal command only from the handler, the dog will "call off" from contact.

HANDLER PROTECTION

The K-9 team, in a patrol vehicle, pulls up to the location of a "suspicious person call." The handler exits the vehicle (with or without the dog at the option of the agency involved), approaches an individual standing nearby, and initiates a "field interview" contact. After approximately 30 seconds the subject suddenly physically assaults the handler. The dog shall react to the attack by either of the following actions:

1. "Conditioned" defense of handler, no command given;
2. Respond when called upon by the handler's verbal command.

The dog will defend the handler by making physical contact with the aggressive suspect. The dog must "call off" upon a verbal command by the handler. Upon release, the dog will remain under control of the handler.

The evaluator will be fully apprised of the pertinent agency policies and regulations prior to commencement of the exercise. The "correct" response or reaction of the handler, the dog or the two acting together, may differ from agency to agency, based on prevailing department policy.

NARCOTICS DETECTION

While demonstrating reasonable control and coordination between the handler and canine used in narcotics detection, the canine must find a minimum of three different types of narcotics (Cocaine, Heroin, Marijuana) within a reasonable period of time in three different types of locations in order to successfully complete this scenario.

There shall be a recognized signal "alert" from the dog to the handler which indicates that the dog has located the controlled substance. The handler must be able to interpret the dog's "alert" clearly enough to be able to inform the evaluator of the substance's location. Once handlers have signaled their canines alert to the evaluator, the exercise is complete. The handler must demonstrate the ability to control the dog fully throughout all phases of the search.

Each location will contain two hidden controlled substance samples. The K-9 team must detect a minimum of one of the two hidden samples during each test. With regard to the building search, it is recommended that one sample be located at least six feet above floor height. It is also recommended that the controlled substance samples be placed a reasonable distance apart to ensure distinctive separate alerts for each find. With regard to the vehicle search, there should be three vehicles used. One of the two vehicles should contain an exterior sample; and the third vehicle should act as a "control test."

To assure adequate scent dispersion, setup time for each sample shall be a minimum of at least 30 minutes prior to the actual search. Controlled substance samples should weigh no less than five grams and no more than one kilogram of any named substance.

It is further recommended that a K-9 team trained to detect other controlled substances be evaluated in the same manner as outlined above.

K-9 TEAM EVALUATORS' COURSE (8 hours)

OBJECTIVES

1. Train students how to evaluate a K-9 team's performance under POST guidelines.
2. Train students how to interpret and apply a reasonable and uniform evaluation of standards set forth in POST guidelines for patrol/narcotic detection dogs.
3. Demonstration of Evaluator Skills as a final test. At course completion, students must have demonstrated the ability to properly apply POST K-9 team guidelines in the evaluation process to the course provider's satisfaction.

EXPANDED COURSE OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Objectives
- B. Overview of course
- C. Review POST *Voluntary K-9 Team Guidelines*

II. DEMONSTRATION

- A. Demonstrate a canine team completing scenarios that meet recommended guidelines.
- B. POST-approved video demonstrations may be used.

III. SCENARIOS

- A. Equipment
 1. Use actual field equipment deployed by agency being evaluated throughout the testing process.
 - a. Dog
 - b. Handler
 - c. Training
 - d. Materials needed for evaluation (narcotic aids, etc.)

- B. Use of agitators/assistants
 - 1. Agency being tested will provide assistants and/or agitators to work under direction of the evaluator.
 - 2. Evaluator to provide clear directions
- C. Site selection
 - 1. Select area conducive to testing
 - 2. Tested agency selects site, subject to approval of evaluator
- D. Reasonable test conditions
 - 1. All testing scenarios should be designed to reasonable working conditions
 - 2. Extreme testing situations should be avoided
- E. Safety considerations
 - 1. Apply POST Specific Safety Policy for canine training. (NOTE: SAFETY GUIDELINES MUST BE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED BY POST PRIOR TO COURSE PRESENTATIONS.)
 - 2. Canine First Aid

IV. UNIFORM APPLICATION OF STANDARDS

- A. Definition of terms
 - 1. See glossary
- B. POST voluntary guidelines
 - 1. These are NOT the evaluator's guidelines

V. LOCAL CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Prior to testing
 - 1. The evaluator should become familiar with the agency's policies, procedures, and standards.
 - 2. The evaluator should know, prior to testing, what field equipment is normally used by the agency.
- B. During evaluation process
 - 1. The evaluator should make reasonable accommodations to the agencies'

K-9 Teams being tested without deviating from POST guidelines.

2. Test only those topics within the guidelines that are applicable to the agency being evaluated

VI. TESTING

A. How to use the scenarios

1. Refer to Scenarios for K-9 Team testing

B. Evaluator's discretion

1. Minor mistakes (second commands, etc.)
2. Reasonable time
3. Test termination

C. Failure of test

1. Must wait at least 24 hours before retesting
2. Test only the major topic failed
3. Failure of any required portion of narcotics evaluation mandates a complete retest for that substance.

VII. EVALUATION FORMS

A. How to use forms

B. Use comments section only if there is failure

1. Write brief comments
2. Avoid training recommendations

C. Signed evaluation forms are to be left with the agency being evaluated

D. Indicate on the evaluation form the type of agency equipment used during the testing process

VIII. REASONABLE APPLICATION OF POST GUIDELINES

A. Do NOT dictate agency policy

B. Work within agency policy

GLOSSARY

DEFINITION OF TERMS

ALERT

A recognized signal from the dog to the handler.

CALL OFF

A voice, hand or combination command, from handler to dog, which results in the dog ceasing an activity.

CONDITIONED RESPONSE

An aggressive, defensive, or protective action initiated by the dog without command by the handler.

FIELD EQUIPMENT

That equipment used by the dog or the handler while performing normal duties.

HANDLER

The person that deploys the dog as part of the K-9 team.

TOPICS

Limited to headings of Obedience, Search, Apprehension, Handler Protection, and Narcotics Search.

(Individual tests of standards within topics should not be eliminated)

TRAINER

Current trainer of canine team designated by employing agency.

APPENDIX A

K-9 TEAM EVALUATION

NAME OF AGENCY _____

NAME OF HANDLER _____

NAME OF K-9 _____

NAME OF EVALUATOR _____

EQUIPMENT USED _____

DATE _____

OBEDIENCE TEST

CRITICAL TASKS: Obedience and Control of K-9

1. ON LEASH PASS ____ FAIL ____

Normal---Fast---Left Turn---Right Turn---About Turn---

2. OFF LEASH PASS ____ FAIL ____

Fast---Normal---Left Turn---Right Turn---About Turn---

3. DOWN IN MOTION PASS ____ FAIL ____

Down/Stay---Recall---Finish---

4. DOWN FROM A DISTANCE PASS ____ FAIL ____

Stand/Sit---Sit---Down---Recall---Finish

DISTRACTIONS: _____

COMMENTS: _____

K-9 TEAM EVALUATION

NAME OF AGENCY _____

NAME OF HANDLER _____

NAME OF K-9 _____

NAME OF EVALUATOR _____

EQUIPMENT USED _____

DATE _____

SEARCH TEST

CRITICAL TASKS: Reasonable Control, Locate Suspect, Signal
Recognition

1. BUILDING SEARCH PASS _____ FAIL _____

Control---Locate---Recognition---Reasonable Search Time---

2. OUTDOOR SEARCH PASS _____ FAIL _____

Control---Locate---Recognition---Reasonable Search Time---

COMMENTS: _____

K-9 TEAM EVALUATION

NAME OF AGENCY _____

NAME OF HANDLER _____

NAME OF K-9 _____

NAME OF EVALUATOR _____

EQUIPMENT USED _____

DATE _____

APPREHENSION TEST

CRITICAL TASKS: Control, Pursuit, Contact, and Call off

1. APPREHENSION WITHOUT CONTACT PASS___FAIL___

Control---Pursuit on Command---Call off without Contact---

2. APPREHENSION WITH CONTACT PASS___FAIL___

Control---Pursuit on Command---Contact---Call off---

COMMENTS: _____

K-9 TEAM EVALUATION

NAME OF AGENCY _____

NAME OF HANDLER _____

NAME OF K-9 _____

NAME OF EVALUATOR _____

EQUIPMENT USED _____

DATE _____

HANDLER PROTECTION TEST

CRITICAL TASKS: The dog makes physical contact with aggressor, the dog "calls-off" on verbal command, the dog remains under control.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. | PHYSICAL CONTACT | PASS____FAIL____ |
| 2. | CALL OFF | PASS____FAIL____ |
| 3. | REMAINS UNDER CONTROL | PASS____FAIL____ |

COMMENTS: _____

NARCOTICS K-9 TEAM EVALUATION

NAME OF AGENCY _____

NAME OF HANDLER _____

NAME OF K-9 _____

NAME OF EVALUATOR _____

EQUIPMENT USED _____

DATE _____

NARCOTICS SEARCH TEST

CRITICAL TASKS: Reasonable Control, Find One of the Two Narcotics in each of the three types of locations.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. | BUILDING SEARCH | PASS___FAIL___ |
| | Heroin___Cocaine___Marijuana___ | |
| 2. | VEHICLE SEARCH | PASS___FAIL___ |
| | Heroin___Cocaine___Marijuana___ | |
| 3. | OUTSIDE AREA SEARCH | PASS___FAIL___ |
| | Heroin___Cocaine___Marijuana___ | |
| 4. | OTHER SEARCH | PASS___FAIL___ |

COMMENTS: _____

